

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1503

January 10, 2019

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, Minority Leader Schumer,

I strongly urge you to pass H.R. 265, the Agriculture Appropriations bill, to reopen the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and restore programs and services that are vital to Iowa's farmers and rural communities.

The lapse in USDA federal funding will have a significant impact on an industry that is an economic driver and job creator across the state of Iowa. So long as the USDA remains unfunded, hundreds of crucial programs and services are unavailable, preventing Iowa farmers from providing for their families and feeding people at home and around the world.

More specifically, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), which provides farmers with direct payments, accepts loan applications, helps farmers navigate regulations, provides disaster assistance payments, and assists in conservation efforts, is closed. Emergency aid relief for farmers impacted by retaliatory tariffs may now be delayed. Farmers are unable to cash crucial checks or make loan payments, and refunds to farmers will not be processed during the shutdown. This is particularly harmful to beginning, young, and family farmers who rely on FSA services to start and strengthen their operations.

Farmers in my district are struggling due to government dysfunction. Iowa risks serious financial ramifications if the USDA remains closed. It could force Iowa farmers into debt and hamper their ability to prepare for next season. Additionally, studies have shown that each dollar of net farm income results in an additional 60 cents of economic activity within rural, small communities. A loss of farm productivity would negatively impact our rural communities.

Funding the USDA, which has historically received strong bipartisan support, would significantly help Iowa farmers and rural communities, while allowing Congress and the President to continue negotiations to better strengthen our border security.

I strongly urge you to put politics aside and pass H.R. 265.

Sincerely,

  
Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress